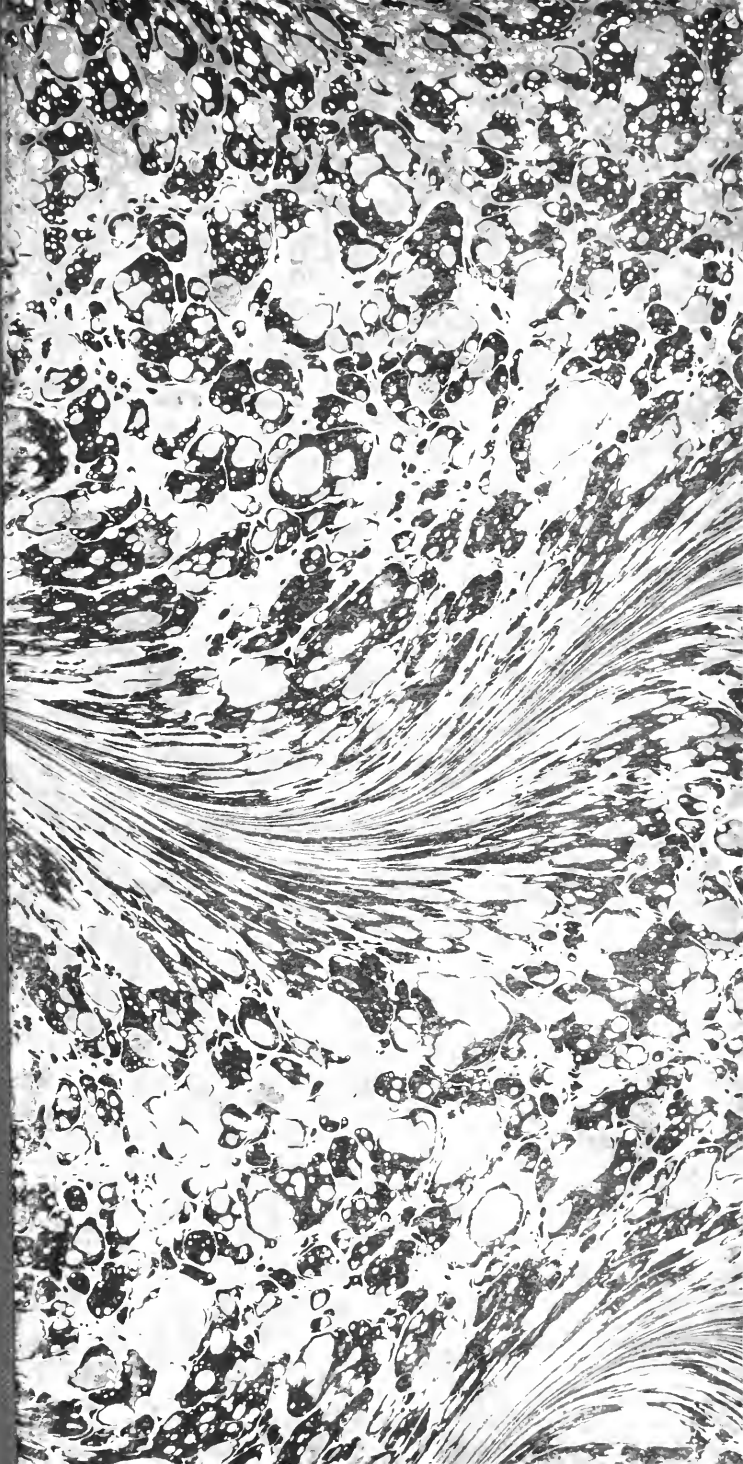




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3.

THE  
PLAN of an ESSAY  
UPON  
DELICACY.

WITH A  
SPECIMEN of the WORK.  
In TWO DIALOGUES.

---

By NATHANIEL LANCASTER, LL. D.

---

*Aggrediar, non tam perficiundi  
Spe, quam experiundi voluntate.*

CICERO.

---

L O N D O N :

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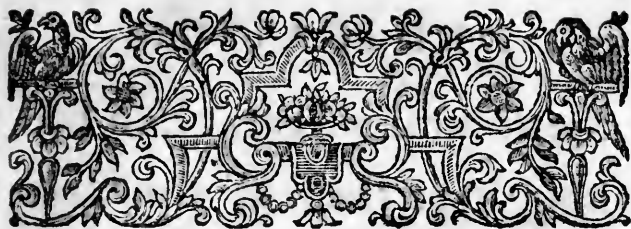
ARTS

AND

SCIENCE

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK



TO  
The Right Honorable  
The EARL of  
**CHOLMONDELEY.**

My LORD,  
**T**HE men of LETTERS  
seem to have well con-  
sulted their own reputation and  
interest, when they threw off  
A 2 the

iv. DEDICATION.

the illiberal reserve, which had long kept them at a distance from the conversible part of mankind, and secluded them from the high advantages of that excellent school, which we call the POLITE WORLD. For it is a free and open commerce with people of distinction and cultivated abilities, which gives the true embellishment to sense, and renders the attainments of the scholar conducive to the purposes of elegance and delight.

That



That freedom of debate and diversity of topics, which adorn the conversations of men of rank and polite literature, will give his mind a generous enlargement, and open to him delightful scenes of knowledge, at once awakening the imagination and informing the understanding. From their disquisitions he will learn what is beautiful in the productions of art; from their demeanor, what is comely in manners. For where the ad-

vantages of birth and station are united with liberal accomplishments, there is the feat of elegance and the standard of politeness.

Tho' the quickness of familiar discourse admit not of an attention to that accuracy, which is required in writing ; yet there is in these exalted intercourses, a certain superior spirit and genuine eloquence ; which is, perhaps, a better help to the improvement of style, and a more enlivening model  
for

for imitation, than the cold efforts of the closet were ever able to produce. Those happy turns, and emphatical sprightly phrases, which are struck out by the heat of animated conversation, and that genteel graceful dignity of expression, which is peculiar to those who move in the higher spheres of life, will catch the ear of him who is familiarly accustomed to them, and steal, in some degree, into his own diction. For as our senses naturally retain the print of the images which are com-

monly presented to them ; so our language almost unavoidably takes a tincture from those, with whom we usually converse. These effects are so constant, that we seldom fail to discover by a man's writings, with what kind of society he has generally mixed.

I must add ; that in these high scenes of observation, there are frequently such lucky hints thrown out, as prove a fruitful source of thoughts and imagination, which

which would never have occurred to him in the studious hour, or in the company of meaner spirits.

These, My LORD, are some of the advantages, which men of elevated character and refined genius, communicate to him who is honored with their intimacy, and whose mind is susceptible of the impressions. They raise him, as it were, above himself, giving him to enjoy some share of their spirit, and darting a light into his breast,

x DEDICATION.

breast, from that fire which  
enflames their own - - -

“Quasi lumen de lumine suo accendunt.

If under the incitement  
of these animating influences,  
he should try to display the  
beauties of DELICACY; the  
greatness of the encouragement  
may, in some measure, justify  
the boldness of the attempt :  
tho’ it will be far from excu-  
sing the unsuccessful execu-  
tion. And should he happen  
not to fail ; he can claim no  
other

DEDICATION. xi

other merit, but that of a faithful RELATOR; since his pretensions go no farther, than to give them back the images of their own minds.

With this view the following ESSAY was undertaken: which is here, with a warm sense of gratitude, addressed to Your LORDSHIP; whose indulgence lifted me up to that experience of life, and observation on TASTE and MANNERS, which gave birth to this design, supplied me with materials,  
and

xii DEDICATION.

and was the only foundation,  
on which I could build any  
hopes of success.

I am, My LORD, with  
the utmost deference and re-  
spect,

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Obedient

AND

Most Obliged

Humble Servant,

NATHANIEL LANCASTER.



T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**A**MIDST the variety of compositions, with which the learned of this nation have enriched the REPUBLIC OF LETTERS, we still want a TREATISE upon that QUALITY, which gives the finishing touches to the culture of the UNDERSTANDING, and diffuses the finest delights through the commerce of HUMAN LIFE.

Tho' in the celebrated performances of our most elegant writers, we meet with many masterly strokes,  
and

and beautiful observations upon it ; yet lying widely, scattered in various intermitted speculations, they have not that efficacy, which results from a regular plan and connected system.

But if all that occurs were brought into one entire view, and ranged in the best order ; many things would still be wanting to complete the work, and give us that fulness of satisfaction, which we should have received, had they entered professedly upon the subject. Therefore, as it is impossible not to admire what they have done ; it is natural to wish they had done more, and anticipated the necessity of any farther enquiries.

This omission, it has been said, was owing to an opinion, for some time too successfully propagated — That HE only, who had attained the high accomplishment, was equal to the  
the

the task ; and that to undertake the subject, carried with it an air of arrogating the character. This was an obstruction, not to be surmounted by the cautious candidate for literary fame : since the very attempt to obtain, must unavoidably frustrate his hopes of public approbation.

If the author of the following *ESSAY* had been persuaded, either that this opinion had any foundation in truth, or was still generally received ; the same restraining considerations would have kept him in the same bounds. But since he finds, it has now no longer the countenance of numbers, and is satisfied, it never had the authority of reason, he hopes he may endeavor to explain the nature, and illustrate the beauties of *DELICACY*, without the imputation of assuming to himself the glory of the attainment.

A man

A man may certainly be qualified to describe a character in his closet, tho' he cannot act up to it in life : as we often find men well versed in the theory of an art, and able to point out its several excellencies, who want either faculties or attention to reach the practice. The talents are founded upon different principles ; and the one may subsist without the other, in the highest perfection.

If this be not allowed ; the poet, as well as the historian, must be possessed of every great quality, which he paints with accuracy, or traces with discernment. And when we find him successful in describing the exploits of an Hero, we must conclude, that he is himself no less expert in the military art, and endued with equal magnanimity. But it cannot

cannot be denied that there has been many a writer capable of drawing up an army, and fighting a battle in all the propriety and vigor of language, who had confessedly as little address to conduct the one, as courage to attempt the other in the field of action ———

“—linguâ melior, sed frigida bello  
“ Dextera——”.

And why should the possession of the quality be thought more requisite in the display of DELICACY? This is so far from appearing evident; that it seems rather to be, in some respects, a kind of disqualifying circumstance. It is not improbable, that the fine sensations in the soul of him, who has attained to this high refinement, might prevent him from doing full justice to his own accomplishments: for DELICACY is always found to withdraw itself from every thing  
a that

that has the least appearance of vanity. But if this obstruction could be got over ; yet when it is known to be his own picture, which he exhibits to view, it may be looked upon as the representation of features and lineaments heightened by self-regard and the bias of a partial judgment.

But tho' the attainment of the quality is not requisite in the writer ; yet it is essentially necessary that he should be intimately acquainted with those, in whom it is found to exist.

This is the source from whence he must draw not only the materials for his work, but the ability of carrying it into execution. For it is only by frequent intercourses with men of rank and polite acquirements, that he can wear himself into that cast  
of

of sentiment and expression, which the dignity of his subject indispensably demands.

It has been the author's fortune, to be admitted into those high scenes of improvement, and to have long been honored with the acquaintance of persons, not less distinguished by the refinement of their abilities, than the eminence of their station.

On this foundation he builds his hopes. On the encouragement of such advantages he rests his apology for the undertaking; neither vainly assuring himself, that he has been able to make a right use of the opportunities, nor meanly courting the reader's favor, by professing a very low opinion of his performance. He chuses rather freely to confess, he has here exerted his best endeavors, and entirely

a 2

ly

ly submits himself to the decision of the public.

If he should be judged unequal to the task; yet (he is inclined to think) the DESIGN may not be altogether useless. Tho' the plant did not thrive where it first sprung; yet being removed to a better soil, it may gain new vigor, and advance to maturity.

But whatever be the event; it will be attended with this agreeable reflection; that he has not spent his hours in trifling amusements, but in disquisitions of a serious nature and real concernment to mankind. Certainly we were intended for some farther satisfactions, than the attainment of such things only, as are barely necessary to the support of our being. We have faculties adapted to the enjoyment of REFINED DELIGHTS :  
Those



Those delights must therefore be relative to human life ; which would prove a very insipid possession, without this heightening relish of existence. The animal functions might indeed be carried on ; but scarce with any joy beyond what the brutes themselves experience. The elegant pleasures of imagination, the enlivening satisfactions of liberal knowledge, and all the sweet effects of the amiable passions would be entirely set aside, and the rational part of the creation abandoned to the low employment of gratifying the coarsest appetites in the coarsest manner. Slender and sordid would be the intercourses of the friend and companion ; if friend and companion could then be found : social pleasure would degenerate into SAVAGE MERRIMENT ; and decent familiarity, into detestable freedoms ; were they not under the controul

and guidance of this restraining quality.

But the pleasure arising from the cultivation of this accomplishment, is not the only circumstance, which recommends it to our regard : for whilst it improves our joys, it refines our MORALS, by cherishing those fine emotions in the soul, which create an abhorrence of every thing that is base and irregular, and prepare the way for the easier impressions of virtue and honor. The taste of beauty in the lower kind, leads naturally to the higher : and the love of harmony in exterior things, is a good step towards the relish of what is graceful and amiable in the inward principles of the heart.

Whoever therefore undertakes the cause of DELICACY, is engaged, at the same time, in the support

port of VIRTUE, and consults the happiness of every individual member of society. For the manners of the GREAT are so constantly copied by their inferiors, that when a right sense of order and decency prevails among the former, it will not be altogether wanting in the latter. The spirit of refinement stops not where it was first raised, but is caught from breast to breast: and tho' it operate with the greatest efficacy where it finds the best materials; yet, in some degree, it is communicated to the whole body of the people.

It is the design of the author to set these points in a clear light; and to demonstrate, that elegance of taste and refinement of manners are the proper objects of a rational pursuit, illustrious ornaments to human nature, and leading characters to a virtuous and moral conduct. And if  
his

his endeavors should fall far beneath the dignity of the subject ; he hopes, however, they may be considered as a testimony of his warm regard, and of the deference and honor he thinks due to those elevated characters, under whose influence we behold arts and ingenuity encouraged, life understood, and BRITAIN aspiring to the reputation of ATTIC ELEGANCE and ROMAN URBANITY. And tho' her advances may not, perhaps, keep pace with the eagerness of our wishes ; yet this should rather animate than discourage her progress : since it is observable, that the extraordinary assiduity and skill necessarily employed to raise and perfect the polish of the NOBLER GEMS, is amply compensated by that admiration and pleasure, which result from the superior lustre.

T H E

PLAN of the whole WORK.

*THE GENERAL DESIGN of this undertaking is, to explain the nature, trace out the standard, and recommend the cultivation of that quality, which in our language is marked out by the denomination of DELICACY.*

*The work is carried on by way of DIALOGUE, and opens with the characters of two gentlemen, who keep up the full enjoyment of those satisfactions, which arise from the harmony of friendship; though in some respects the turn of their minds is extremely different.*

*The*

*The one is a warm admirer of elegance in arts and manners, and is perpetually contending for the necessity of cultivating a refined taste. The other thinks, that good sense and virtue are sufficient recommendations, and stand in need of no adventitious ornaments.*

*The conversation begins with a dispute concerning the origin of society, which, the author apprehends, will not be esteemed an improper introduction to a work of this kind; since all the embellishments of life are undeniably derived from our associations.*

*In the SECOND DIALOGUE, the meaning of the word DELICACY is explained,*

*plained, agreeably to what seems the genuine acceptation of it amongst our most approved writers-----The nature of the quality, the criterion by which it is ascertained, the objections made to the cultivation of refined taste and passion, and the use and pleasure arising from it, are distinctly examined.*

*The next treats of the rise of elegant arts and manners, enquires from what source, it is most probable, they derived their original; and tho' the former may have first risen in a FREE STATE, whether the MONARCHICAL FORM be not a more proper nursery for the latter. This enquiry is followed by a comparifon between the ANCIENTS and MODERNS with respect*

xxviii      The PLAN of  
*respect to the* DELICACY of GOOD  
BREEDING.

*The FOURTH examines what it is, which constitutes DELICACY in WRITING----. And enquires into the characters of several greek and roman authors, so far as relates to the subject of this ESSAY ; in which respect, VIRGIL is allowed to have greatly surpassed HOMER. This opens the way to some observations upon the court of AUGUSTUS, and the advances which were made in elegance and politeness under the influence of that accomplished prince.*

*The FIFTH is a dissertation upon the rise and progress of refinement in  
the*



*the language, compositions, and manners of the ENGLISH NATION.*

*The SIXTH considers those qualities, which constitute DELICACY in a PUBLIC SPEAKER ; and to what degree it seems to have risen in this country ---- whether the flowers of ancient rhetoric and elocution, are preferable to plain good sense and argument ; beyond which point, the ENGLISH ELOQUENCE is said scarce to aspire. This conversation is closed with some reflections upon the power of fine language ; which is compared to that of MUSIC, and shewn to be, in some respects, similar, in the effects it produces.*

*The*

*The SEVENTH treats of that faculty in the art of PAINTING, which is called GRACE, and points out those masters, who have been most distinguished by this quality.*

*The FOUR succeeding dialogues exhibit the character of an accomplished gentleman, and display his conduct in the various scenes of life and conversation; shewing at the same time, that the truest and highest refinement consists in the PURITY OF MORALS; and that VIRTUE is the most illustrious ornament of human nature.*

*In contrast to this representation of elegance and sanctity of manners,*

*ners, is exhibited the view of an impure and uncultivated demeanor; that the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other may appear in a stronger point of light, by the neighborhood of its contrary character.*

*The NEXT dialogue touches upon the peculiar charms of FEMALE ELEGANCE, and shews with what a superior lustre DELICACY manifests itself in that sex, which is tempered with a purer flame, and formed with a quicker sensibility, and higher relish of every ornament and grace.*

*The LAST Conversation recommends the farther cultivation of this accomplishment, and enquires whether*  
*the*

xxxii      The PLAN of the WORK.

*the advances, we have made in it, are equal to those of a neighboring nation ; and if not, to what causes the difference may be ascribed.*

*The ESSAY ends with a dissertation on those Deities, which were said by the ancients to be the source of all that is amiable and pleasing, to dispense justness of taste, love of beauty, and that happiness of manner, which adorns and enlivens MERIT, and is a proper attendant upon SENSE and LEARNING : for which reason they usually represented the GRACES in the train of the GOD OF WISDOM*

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AN  
ESSAY  
UPON  
DELICACY.

---

DIALOGUE I.

**P**HILOCLES is one of those few, who can be chearful and employed, without having recourse to the business or diversions of the world. He has a warm imagination tempered with an excellent understanding, both which he

B

has

has improved by a judicious mixture of reading and conversation.

Tho' his inclination has led him into retirement ; his talents qualify him for making a figure in the active scenes of life. Yet at the same time, it must be confessed, there is a certain natural delicacy in the frame of his mind, which would have rendered him less serviceable in business, than others of inferior abilities without the same refinement of temper. He is arrived to that period of life, when the powers of the mind are in their truest vigor : and having conversed at large long enough to give him a thorough knowledge of mankind, he has narrowed his friendships, as well as acquaintance, desiring but few of either.

The spot he has chosen for his retirement is within a convenient distance of the town, yet not so near as to want any advantages of the country. He is a professed admirer

## DIALOGUE I. 3

admirer of what he calls REFINED SIMPLICITY, and discovers that chastity of taste, not only in his judgment of the fine arts, but in his house, his furniture, his equipage ; and in short, throughout the whole conduct and oeconomy of his life.

At a small distance from his house stands a wood ; which has so many natural beauties attending it, that with a very inconsiderable expence, and by judiciously humoring the genius of the place, he has made it one of the most delightful scenes imaginable. In the centre he has erected a little temple, the materials of which are cheap and common : yet they are chosen with such judgment, and thrown together with such art, that perhaps the most costly ornaments could not have produced any thing more pleasing to a just eye. It is covered with thatch, and paved with pebbles ; and the pillars are nothing more than the trunks of some old oaks, which grew

## 4 DIALOGUE I.

upon the spot. But the plan is so happily designed, and so neatly executed ; and the several parts are so harmoniously proportioned to each other, as well as to the whole, that it forms one of the most agreeable structures I ever beheld.

To this favorite scene PHILOCLES retires, whenever he would enjoy himself or his friend without interruption. And here it was that SOPHRONIUS found him in his evening meditations, having been informed at his house, that he was taking a walk in the wood.

SOPHRONIUS and PHILOCLES have long lived together in the strictest intimacy, and most unreserved communication of sentiments. SOPHRONIUS has a just, rather than a lively imagination. His sense is strong, but improved more by the force of his own reflections, than by books ; for he has thought much more than he has read. Not  
that



# DIALOGUE I. 5

that he is unacquainted with the capital authors, both ancient and modern: but it is his maxim, that “Books have made more “fools than ever nature designed.” Truth is the single aim of his inquiries: and to strew her paths with flowers, is, he thinks, to retard rather than forward the progress towards her. The mind is amusing herself with little artificial beauties in the way, whilst she should be pushing forward to the end of her journey. In short, as he is naturally of a phlegmatic constitution, he declares against enthusiasm of every sort, esteeming her as the worst enemy that truth has to fear. He frequently rallies PHILO- CLES upon this article; whom he thinks upon many occasions, especially where the fine arts are concerned, a downright visionary.

After the general compliments had passed between these two friends—How, said SOPHRONIUS smiling, shall I answer it to the

## 6 DIALOGUE I.

Dryad of these groves, for thus breaking in upon the contemplations of her votary; when, perhaps, she is even now expecting you under some venerable oak, or favorite elm?

However romantic you may affect to think me in my amours, replied PHILO-CLES, you do not in good earnest, I hope, believe me so ill a judge of real happiness, as to imagine me capable of thinking I could exchange the pleasures of friendship for any more valuable enjoyment. No, SOPHRONIUS! as great an admirer as I am of these beauties of nature, she is no where so charming to me, as in her moral operations, and that harmony she produces from social concord.

Were I to have traced the Genealogy of friendship, returned SOPHRONIUS, I should hardly have expected to find nature her parent. It seems to me much more  
reasonable

## DIALOGUE I. 7

reasonable to suppose this union derived from necessity and convenience, or some other principle arising from our wants and imperfections, than any implanted bias in our frame, previous to those uneasy feelings. The state of nature could not have admitted of this refined commerce ; since every individual, at that period, must have had a separate and opposite interest.

It is for that reason, among others, answered PHILOCLES, why I think it improbable, that such a state should ever have existed. There is in our frame so strong a bias, such an irresistible tendency to unite in the social circle, that we must either suppose mankind formed originally with affections very different from what appear in them at present, or give up the notion of this barbarous state, as an absurd and groundless supposition.

## 8 DIALOGUE I.

It is not to be wondered, said SOPHRONIUS, that the first view of this rude state should startle a mind, which has been accustomed to a regular community, and has formed its ideas of truth from familiar appearances of improved nature. But it is very easy to mistake habits for affections, and ascribe to the direct impulse of nature, what is, in reality, owing to the maturity of time, and the discipline of many generations. Societies have been long established : use has taught us the advantages, that are derived from them ; and therefore we fancy that men fall naturally and unavoidably into associations ; when the truth is, they are only inclined to be sociable from practice, rather than from any immediate incitement of nature, or the love of their species. Look back upon the accounts which poets, philosophers, and historians give of mankind in the infancy of the world ; and you will have a view very inconsistent with a principle

## DIALOGUE I. 9

principle of friendly union and social coalition. They describe them not only without arts and sciences, but without habitations, laws, or even language itself, and feeding upon the raw herbage, like their fellow brutes, the tenants of the same shade and pasture. I remember a passage in Cicero, where he speaks to this purpose of the first race of mortals <sup>a</sup>. And Horace <sup>b</sup>, as well as Lucretius <sup>c</sup>, you know, talk of them exactly in the same manner.

In short, all the records of antiquity affirm, that in the first ages, the conceptions of mankind, their manners and  
dispositions

<sup>a</sup> Nam fuit quoddam tempus, cum in agris homines, bestiarum more vagabantur: nec quidquam ratione animi, sed pleraque viribus corporis administrabant. Non jus æquabile, quicquid utilitatis haberet, acceperat, &c.

CICERO de Invent. lib. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Cum proreperunt primis animalia terris,  
Mutum & turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter,  
Unguibus & pugnis, dein fistibus, atque ita porro  
Pugnabant armis, &c.

HOR. Sat. lib. 1.

<sup>c</sup> — Nemora atque cavas montes sylvasque colebant,  
Et frutices inter condebant squallida membra.

LUCRET.

## 10 DIALOGUE I.

dispositions were rude, barbarous and brutal ; that their attainments went no higher than satisfying at any rate the coarse demands of their unrestrained appetites : and thus being under no controul in the gratification of their selfish passions, they ran into the most violent excesses, and were perpetually invading and seizing each other's property. This is the despicable figure mankind make in the several ancient pictures of their original state.

I acknowledge, said PHILOCLEES, that this was the doctrine of the Epicureans : but the principles of a particular sect cannot be looked upon as the standard of antiquity. It is usual with the learned, when they are endeavoring to establish some favorite hypothesis, to pick out a passage from a greek or roman author, that happens to co-incide with the notion to be advanced, and then argue from it, as a received principle among the ancients. Superficial

## DIALOGUE I. II

perſical reaſoners and minute philoſophers may be thus deceived: but SOPHRONIUS, I am ſure, is not ſo eaſily impoſed upon. And if he had been in the humor, he could have drawn up a long liſt of clafſical names, to throw into the ſcale againſt thoſe he juſt now mentioned. What think you of the GOLDEN AGE, when —

Nay, interpoſed SOPHRONIUS, if you are for ſoaring to the airy regions of romance, I will not endeavour to attend your flight. I can follow you well enough, whiſt you keep within the humble paths of ſober reaſoning: but the towerings of an heated imagination are much too elevated for my reach.

— Have patience, good SOPHRONIUS! I was only going to mention what ſome of the ancients have thought concerning the ſtate of man, when he was yet new to being, and freſh from the hands of his Creator. The deſcription Ovid gives of his ſituation,  
in

## 12 DIALOGUE I.

in that first period of his existence, seems (some poetical embellishments excepted) such as, were we to reason *à priori*, we should conclude he was placed in. The first characteristic he gives of it is innocence —

“ First rose a golden age ! the human mind  
To faith’s fair rules spontaneous then inclin’d,  
“ Unforc’d by punishment, unaw’d by fear :  
“ Man’s words were simple, and his soul sincere.

Seneca likewise gives an account of the state of nature, as it stood in Saturn’s reign, exactly conformable to this notion of social virtue being then exercised in all its purity and peace -----

Nor

“ Aurea prima fata est ætas, quæ vindice nullo,  
Sponte suâ sine lege fidem rectumq; colebat :  
Pœna metusq; aberant, &c.

“ Tunc illa virgo, numinis magni dea,  
“ Justitia cœlo missa, cum sanctâ fide,  
“ Terras regebat mitis. Humanum genus  
“ Non bella norant ——— &c.”

Then



Nor does it seem in the least improbable, that such a happiness might once have been the lot of mortals; tho' their present degenerate state is so different from it, as to need the strongest restraints, to keep up any tolerable degree of order in the world. The lust of avarice and ambition now indeed divide mankind, and destroy their mutual harmony. But before covetousness crept into the world; before men had any temptation to invade the rights of equality; when titles, distinctions, and pre-eminences were yet unknown; why might not a number of people have

Then justice, virgin pure, of sovereign power,  
 With sacred faith, attendant handmaid, sent  
 To this our globe, dominion held o'er men,  
 And rul'd with absolute, but gentle sway.  
 Unheard was discord's voice, and din of war,  
 The clash of arms, and trumpet's direful sound:  
 Nor walls, nor bulwarks, cities yet had rais'd:  
 Pervious and safe each unfenc'd entrance lay.  
 Peculiar rights were then unknown to men;  
 One common stock supply'd the friendly race:  
 The teeming earth pour'd out her fruitful stores  
 Spontaneous to her sons—kind parent she,  
 And tender guardian! pious children they!

SENECA, Trag. Octav. Act. 2.

have lived together in amity, enjoying every thing in common, and content with the natural products of the earth in some happy climate?

Because it is inconsistent with the nature of human creatures, answered SOPHRONIUS, that any number of them should live together in concord, without the curb of government. Had we come into the world with such dispositions, as our first parents are said to have possessed before their fall; then indeed those tranquil joys, which have (it should seem) flourished only in song, might have existed in reality. But as to their unhappy offspring, born, as they are, with depraved appetites, and inordinate self-passions, it is absolutely impossible, that either order, peace, or justice could ever have prevailed amongst them, without the aid of some restraining force. Let a man fairly examine human nature, the tendency and effects

## DIALOGUE I. 15

effects of our passions ; and he must allow this to be the case.

It is in vain to produce any authority against the nature of things ; and least of all, that of the poets. They, you know, are not generally the strictest reasoners ; their aim being rather to please than inform. And though there is a thing, which we call truth in their art ; yet not being tied down to severe historical matter of fact, they are at liberty to create scenes, which exist only in imagination. But if names are of any force, I could produce <sup>f</sup> Isocrates, <sup>g</sup> Diodorus, and numbers of the most celebrated ancients, who represent the infancy of the world as rude and barbarous, as Hobbs, or any of the moderns suppose it to have been. Seneca, I will not deny, seems to favor your opinion : and in  
one

<sup>f</sup> Isocrates, Orat. 3. ad Mæclin.

<sup>g</sup> Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

## 16 DIALOGUE I.

one of his epistles, the philosopher is not less warm than the poet, in the description of a GOLDEN AGE <sup>h</sup>. But after he had indulged his lively genius in the fallies of imagination, reason re-assumes her seat, and he freely owns, that philosophy was unknown to the world in that early period; that it was indeed an age of innocence, but not of wisdom; and that the moral character was not then thoroughly understood. For virtue, says he, is not the gift of nature, but the product of art. The seeds of it are indeed sown in our hearts; but if they are not cultivated with the utmost diligence

<sup>h</sup> *Quamvis egregia illis vita fuerit, & carens fraude, non fuere sapientes—Non erant ingenia omnibus consummata—Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars est, bonum fieri—Ignorantiâ rerum innocentes erant. Multum autem interest, utrum peccare aliquis nolit, an nesciat. Deerat illis justitia, deerat prudentia, deerat temperantia & fortitudo. Omnibus his virtutibus habebat similia quædam rudis vita: virtus non contingit animo, nisi instituto & edocto, & ad summum assiduâ cogitatione perducto. Ad hoc quidem, sed sine hoc nascimur: & in optimis quoque antequam erudias, virtutis materia, non virtus est.*

# DIALOGUE I. 17

ligence and care, they will for ever remain in a dormant and inactive state.

Does not this concession entirely demolish the fine fabric he had just before erected? For surely mankind must have been absolutely incapable of living together in social harmony, whilst the mind had not yet received that cultivation, which is requisite to unfold those latent principles of virtue; without which, it is impossible that numbers can live together with any sort of comfort, or maintain any tolerable degree of peace and order. Cicero seems clearly to be of this opinion: for he derives all social concord from the discipline of philosophy, when he breaks out into a celebrated rhapsody upon the pleasing reflection.<sup>i</sup>

C

If

<sup>i</sup> O vitæ philosophia dux! O virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Tu urbes peperisti; tu dissipatos homines in societatem vitæ convocasti: tu eos inter se primo domiciliis, deinde conjugiiis, tum literarum et vocum communione junxisti: tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum, & disciplinæ fuisti!

CICERO *Tusc. disp.* Ald. Venet. p. 242.

If the truth of opinions, returned PHILOCLES, were to be determined by antiquity; those, who maintain the sentiments I am contending for, might at least go as high for their authority, as their opposers. The lines I repeated from OVID seem to be copied from HESIOD; who, as some affirm, was contemporary with HOMER. Though indeed, to trace this notion of the golden age up to it's true source, we must look for it in the Mosaical account of the first state of the world, from whence it seems to be derived. But however, it is certain that the state of nature, as described by HOBBS and his followers, could not have subsisted long enough to be called a State, admitting it ever subsisted at all. As it was nothing but a scene of war, conquest must either have soon introduced subjection; or the sons of men must have been totally extinct. This <sup>k</sup> LUCRETIVUS himself admits,

<sup>k</sup> Genus humanum jam tùm foret omne peremptum :  
Nec potuisset adhuc perducere sæcla propago.

Lucret. Lib. V. Lin. 97, 98.

and owns that mankind must necessarily have perished under the inconveniences of such a situation. Now from hence, it should seem, a strong reason might be drawn, to prove that this state of nature is, at least, as visionary as the golden age. For tell me, SOPHRONIUS, can it be supposed with any justice to the wisdom of the supreme Being, that he placed mankind originally in a situation, that must necessarily have defeated the ends of their creation, and utterly extirpated the whole species from off the face of the earth?

To argue, replied SOPHRONIUS, against the reality of a fact, from its consequences, is hardly a safe method of investigating speculative truths; I mean, where the evidence is strong on the side of the fact; and the consequences are, at best, but hypotheticalal. This at least you must allow, that the doctrine I contend for, has many great and illustrious names on its side.

Not so many, returned PHILOCLES, as might be produced on the contrary <sup>l</sup>. The noble Moralist has opposed it with that sense and spirit, which so eminently distinguish his excellent writings <sup>m</sup>. Mr. LOCK indeed speaks of a state of nature, in contradistinction to civil societies; and seems to think it might have existed <sup>n</sup>. But then he represents it, not as a state of licence and disorder, but as subject to the laws of reason: which, if I do not mistake, is the  
 very

<sup>l</sup> Nihil est tam illustre, quàm conjunctio inter homines hominum —et ipsa caritas generis humani, quæ nata à fatu, quo à procreatoribus nati diliguntur, et tota domus conjugio & stirps conjungitur, serpsit sensim foràs cognationibus primùm; tum affinitatibus, deinde amicitiiis, post vicinitatibus, tum civibus, &c.

Cicer. de Fin. lib. V. edit. Ald. p. 119.

— Omnes inter se naturali quadam benevolentia continentur.

Ibid. De Legibus. lib. I. p. 179

Constituendi verò juris ab illa summa lege capiamus exordium; quæ seculis omnibus antè nata est, quàm scripta lex ulla, aut quàm omnino civitas est constituta.

Ibidem. Leg. I. in initio.

<sup>m</sup> Lord SHAFTESBURY.

<sup>n</sup> Treatise on Government.



## DIALOGUE I. 21

very thing which OVID intended in his description of the golden age : for, no doubt, when the poet says, men observed the rules of right and justice without laws ; he must mean, without those of civil compact.

That mankind are naturally of an uniting social Temper is maintained by GROTIUS, PUFFENDORFF, and many other great and learned men,

Now if their natural sociability be once admitted ; the State of Nature as described by HOBBS, and adopted by my friend, must necessarily fall to pieces ; for most certainly they are not compatible. Think not then, SOPHRONIUS, (to use the words of our ethic poet)

“ Think not, in nature’s state men blindly trod ;

“ The state of nature was the reign of God °.

C 3

If

If mankind, said SOPHRONIUS, had been originally formed with such an affection for each other, as to be led from thence into affociations; this endearing principle must have prevented those bloody violences and fatal quarrels, by which such numbers of the species are constantly diminished. But war seems to be one of those stated methods, that providence takes to remove the generations of men from off the face of the earth; that there may be room for others to take their turn upon this stage of existence. And indeed, were the destructive contentions, that arise from ambition and public resentment, entirely to cease; our species alone would soon overstock the globe. If therefore it had been the Creator's pleasure to have formed us with a strong implanted sense of mutual love; we may presume, the plan of providence would have been very different from

from that, which seems now to be established.

But suppose men were originally framed with this amicable disposition, this fondness for social Intercourse; yet, whatever was the cause, it is evident, they had so far departed from their primæval virtue, that the histories of every country represent a period, when its inhabitants were as savage and unsocial as the state of nature is described. If you question the credit of these records; you need go no farther for full conviction, than our northern islands; in many of which the natives are as little acquainted with order, discipline and justice, or any of the virtues of humanity, as the very brute creation. This agrees exactly with the descriptions given us of other uncivilized people still subsisting in the world. How then do these virtues operate necessarily upon mankind?

I must

I must confess, replied PHILOCLÉS, that I have frequently met with such descriptions : but the testimony of the authors never appeared to me so clear, as to leave no room to call in question their veracity. From the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, there is no people upon earth so savage, as not to have formed some kind of society, some sort of laws, however imperfect, to restrain violences, and punish transgressions. It is absolutely impossible that men could otherwise have subsisted, since the time they fell from their primitive innocence.

But let me ask SOPHRONIUS — Is not well-being agreeable to our nature? —  
“ ----It must be allowed.” Tell me then, can that be obtained without society?  
“ --- Undoubtedly not.” Society therefore must be natural to us. And if it be; is there nothing within us, no impulsive principle

## DIALOGUE I. 25

ciple to excite and lead us to associate ? What think you of pity and compassion ? the general dislike of solitude, and love of company ? Some traces of them, at least, are found in men of all ages and climates. What think you of the powers and capacities of speech ? Why were they given us, if not to be exercised ? And how can they be exercised without society ? It is evident too, that nature has implanted in us the principle of justice : But for what purpose, if not for the use of society ?

It is plain therefore, in every view, that we are formed with a love for our species ; and consequently, with social passions. To consider mankind in any other light, is, to degrade them even below the beasts. What a despicable opinion must that man entertain of the order of beings, to which he belongs, what regard for virtue ! —  
Pardon

Pardon me, good PHILOCLES, if I cannot forbear interrupting you. Men of an elevated spirit are constantly exalting their species to the skies, and branding all those, who talk more temperately on the subject, as enemies to virtue. But you greatly mistake me, if you imagine I have taken this side of the question with any intention to weaken the cause of morality. It is your way to paint mankind, as your generous warmth inclines you to wish they had been formed: whilst men of cooler temper are content to view things as they really are, rather than as a false, tho' pleasing light may represent them. They find nothing to support those high notions you entertain of the intrinsic dignity of the species,—no principles in mankind, which lead directly and necessarily to combining fellowships. Man, say they, was created frail and weak, subject to wants, which in a single capacity he could not supply, and obnoxious  
to

to dangers, against which his own unassisted arm was not a sufficient defence. An union of the MANY was therefore formed, as a remedy for the imbecillity of separate individuals. Hence justice arose ; and the rule of right was ascertained and enforced, as a necessary means to maintain the plan of social order. You assert, that the law of equity is an original implanted principle in the human breast. But if I were inclined to dispute this point with you ; I might ask, what occasion would there have been for such a law, if man had been framed with so ardent an affection towards his species, as you contend for ? Where love reigns in full power, property cannot be a subject of contention. So far is she from doing violence and wrong, that she is ever tender of the welfare and interest of the object beloved, and even lavish in her munificence.

I do

I do not contend, said PHILOCLEES, that the social and kind affections are so strong as to subdue all the rest; but only that there are such passions in mankind, in conjunction with others. The love of our species cannot therefore be said to supersede the love of equity: on the contrary, they are entirely compatible with each other. Nor does it seem in the least to follow, that, if the case be as I have stated it, universal peace and justice must for ever prevail. For man being liable to great errors, not only from the mis-rule of his passions, but the imperfection of his reason, many occasions of moral evil must necessarily arise, notwithstanding the social affections are allowed to exist in all the strength, which I contend for.

But had mutual affection, returned SOPHRONIUS, been only a leading passion in us; or had it been equally ballanced with  
self-



self-regard, all legal restraints had been entirely unnecessary. Man would have been in no danger from the secret attempts of fraud, or the bold attacks of bare-faced oppression: his whole life would have been one continued scene of security and happiness. But the legislators found his real state to be quite another thing. If they did perceive that nature had clearly dictated the law of equity; yet experience taught them, “That the  
 “ administration of that law was so in-  
 “ competently and irregularly executed, as  
 “ to inflame rather than heal the evils of  
 “ the undisciplined state, whilst there was  
 “ no common arbiter to adjust and enforce  
 “ its operations <sup>P</sup>.

These are the reasons, which induce me to believe, that dangers and necessities gave birth to the plan of government. And  
 when

## 30 DIALOGUE I.

when society was established upon a proper basis, and equitable laws had given security to mankind, the community had full experience of its happy effects. But as particulars still felt many wants, for which the public combinations afforded no relief; it was natural for them to look out for a supply to this deficiency. The most obvious seems to be private fellowships; which by an union of hearts, and amicable intercourses might procure enjoyments, which do not result from general associations.

This I take to be the true source of friendship: nor does it appear to me any derogation to the loveliness of the affection. For, what but the imbecillity of our frame gives rise to that passion, which is looked upon as the most amiable belonging to our nature? Had the firmness of our minds been greater, our compassion had certainly been less. For it is ever found, that as the softest metals are most easily dif-

## DIALOGUE I. 31

dissolved; so the tenderest minds soonest melt into pity. This perhaps is the reason, why that sex, whose characteristic is by no means strength, are most liable to the impressions of this afflicting passion.

Pity, returned PHILOCLES, can hardly be said to flow from weakness in the same sense that you suppose social affection to do so: in the latter, weakness is the attribute of that subject, from whence the affection is supposed to proceed; men united, because they found themselves too weak to subsist in a separate state: — but in the former, weakness can only be the attribute of that subject, on which the passion is supposed to operate. It is not the weakness of the distressed object, but of him who beholds it, which produces the sympathizing sorrow. Imbecillity therefore cannot give rise to social Inclinations, in the same way you imagine it does to compassion. The only inference, that can fairly be drawn  
from

## 32 DIALOGUE I.

from your argument, seems to be, that the tenderness of sensations, or weakness (if you will call it so) is the means whereby the passion operates upon any subject : but it does not therefore follow, that it is the fountain of the passion ; or that it is grounded on no other principle in nature. For why should SOPHRONIUS ascribe this susceptibility of compassion, to a weakness of mind ? Is it not far more reasonable to derive it from the quick feeling of the sentiments of humanity, and the sudden exertion of generous sympathy ? Examine the condition of your own breast under a lively sense of pity ; and tell me whether you do not always find, that it gives you an exalted idea of the generosity of your temper, when it is touched in this kind and benevolent way ? And tho' it may perhaps draw tears from your eyes ; yet they are the tears of manly affection, and not the meltings of weak effeminacy. For surely, SOPHRONIUS, there can be no weakness

# DIALOGUE I. 33

ness in compaffion, purely and abftracted-ly confidered; fince the nobleft fouls are open to the ftrongeft impreffions of this kind. HOMER, who had a complete infight into human nature; and fo well underftood what it was that gave the finifhing excellence to a character, represents the hero of his poem, the great ACHILLES himfelf, melting into pity at the miferies of a venerable aged monarch, on his knees begging him to reftore the body of his fon HECTOR. Nay he not only makes him relent, but even endeavor to alluage the forrows of the unhappy prince, with the moft tender, as well as rational confolations<sup>p</sup>. Pity then, in the eftimation

D of

<sup>p</sup> Αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ θρόνου ὀρθοῖο, γέροντα δὲ χειρὸς ἄριστη,  
Οὐκ ἔμρων πολὺν τε κἀγή, πολὺν τε γέροντα.  
Καὶ μιν φωτῆσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.

- “ From the high throne divine Achilles rose:
- “ The rev'rent monarch by the hand he rais'd;
- “ On his white beard and form majestic gaz'd,
- “ Not unrelenting. Then serene began
- “ With words to sooth the miserable man.

Iliad 24. Pope's Transl.

There

of this judicious poet, who was always true to nature, is perfectly compatible with an elevated and sublime spirit. Nay, is it not an attribute ascribed even to the Deity himself? How then can it be derived from so mean an original? It is indeed a softness, but not (as you call it) an imbecillity of heart. JUVENAL, I remember, somewhere extolls it as the best and most lovely passion belonging to human nature, and the distinguishing characteristic of our species 9.

You

There is not, as Mr. Pope observes, a more beautiful passage than this, in the whole Iliad. Homer, to shew that Achilles was not a mere soldier, here draws him as a person of excellent sense, and sound reason. And it was a piece of great judgment thus to describe him : for the reader would have retained but a very indifferent opinion of him, if he had had no qualification, but mere strength. It also shews the art of the poet, thus to defer this part of his character to the conclusion of the poem : By these means, he fixes an idea of his greatness upon our minds, and makes his hero go off the stage with applause.

Pope's Homer, B. 24. p. 168. Ed, 1736.

9 " ——— Mollissima corda

" Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,

" Quæ lachrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensus.

" ——— Separat hoc nos

A grege mutorum.

Juven. Satyr. 15.

" Com-

You must be sensible, returned SOPHRONIUS, that whatever notion the poet might advance to flatter mankind, or beautify his composition; yet the generality of the ancients derived pity from no higher a source than that, which I have assigned. SENECA calls it the fault of a poor pusillanimous spirit; and affirms, that the basest tempers are most susceptible of this passion. The wise and good, says he, will not pity, but he will relieve; but he will run to the aid of the distressed. So far is he from dropping a sympathizing tear with the unhappy; that he is not moved even by his own calamities, but, like a solid rock, reverberates the storm, and stands secure<sup>r</sup>.

D 2

But

“ Compassion proper to mankind appears;  
 “ Which nature witness’d when she gave us tears.  
 ’Tis this, the noblest passion of the mind,  
 Exalts our race above the brutal kind.

<sup>r</sup> Clementiam, mansuetudinemque omnes boni præstabunt: misericordiam autem vitabunt: est enim vitium pusilli animi ad speciem malorum alienorum succidentis. Itaque pessimo cuique

But how does it appear, said PHILOCLES, that PITY has the same idea in our language, which MISERICORDIA had in the roman? Perhaps this might mean a senseless, effeminate consternation, that seizes weak minds on the prospect of any thing disastrous, and deprives them of the capacity to relieve the misery they behold.

There is a passage in the author I just now mentioned, returned SOPHRONIUS, which makes it evident, that he understood by MISERICORDIA, the very same thing, which we do by the word PITY. \* He tell us,  
 “ that

*cuique familiarissima est. Anus & mulierculæ sunt, quæ, &c. — Ergo non miserebitur sapiens, sed succurret, sed proderit. — Ne in suis quidem accidet calamitatibus, sed omnem fortunæ iram reverberabit, & ante se franget, &c.*

Seneca de Clem. lib. II. edit. Dan. Elz. 1672.

\* Vultum quidem non dejiciet, non animum, ob æruscantis alicujus aridam ac pannosam maciem, & innixam baculo senectutem. — Sed omnibus dignis proderit, et deorum more, calamitosos propitius respiciet. Seneca. Ibid.



## DIALOGUE I. 37

“ that a wise man will look upon a beggar laboring under all the distresses of poverty and infirmities of old age, with a countenance unaltered, and his heart unmoved at the sight of the calamity.”  
 From hence it is plain, that in the judgment of this philosopher, it was a weakness, to be moved and disturbed with the misery of another.

CICERO is also clearly of the same opinion, as may be proved from several passages in his philosophical works<sup>t</sup>. And tho’ in some of those places, he is giving us the sentiments of the Stoics; yet he does not hesitate to approve of their opinion<sup>u</sup>. Nay the very definition, which both he and SENECA give of pity, is — “ A disorder

D 3 “ of

<sup>t</sup> Videamus quanta sint, quæ à philosophiâ remedia animorum morbis adhibeantur — variae sunt curationes; alia invidenti, alia miseranti. Cicero. Tusc. Disp. lib. IV. p. 231. edit. Ald. Man. & passim.

<sup>u</sup> Sententiis tamen utendum est eorum (viz. Stoicorum) qui maximè forti, et, ut ita dicam, virili utuntur ratione. Ibid.

## 38 DIALOGUE I.

“ of the mind arising from the view of another person’s misery w.”

Little therefore, good PHILOCLES, will a poetical quotation avail, to ascertain the sentiments of the ancients ; which surely are to be drawn from the sober discourses of their philosophers, rather than the raptures and visions of their poets.

But you send me likewise to the human breast for conviction in this point. Why there it is, that I find my sentiments confirmed. When I behold human calamities ; I perceive all my faculties overpowered at the afflicting sight. The vigor of my mind fails ; and I yield, as it were  
with

w *Misericordia est ægritudo animi ex alienis rebus adversis. Ibidem. And that by ægritudo he meant a disorder or wrong state of mind, is plain from another passage, where he says — Ægritudo est animi, adversante ratione, contractio. Ibid. 218.*

*Misericordia est ægritudo ob alienarum miseriarum speciem, aut tristitia ex alienis malis contracta. Ægritudo autem in sapientem virum non cadit.*

*Seneca de Clementia. Lib. II.*

with reluctance, to some superior force. Men of a more refined frame, who entertain exalted notions of the dignity of man's nature, may flatter themselves, that, in such a situation, they feel a consciousness of generous excellence: But as to my self, I cannot triumph in imaginary greatness of soul, against the clear conviction of my senses. I freely confess, that it is nothing but the weakness of my mind, to which I can ascribe the sudden effects, which an object of misery raises in my breast.

But think not therefore that this is any derogation to the wisdom of the creator. On the contrary, it seems a wise design, to have formed us with this imbecillity, that we might be roused by a quicker impulse than that of reason, and forced to give speedy relief, that we might as speedily ease ourselves of the anxiety raised in us at the sight of distress. Thus do our very frail-

ties and imperfections lead us to benevolence, and draw us into public and private fellowships. Let not then PHILOCLÉS imagine, that I am endeavoring to depreciate either the one or the other, when I say they are derived from weakness and necessity.

That the former could not arise from affection to the species, seems evident from the small degree of it, which was ever found in the world, and from the animosities and contentions, necessarily attending the self-appetites under no legal restraints: And as to the latter; whilst men had no protection and security from laws, self-preservation must have been the only object of their attention and care. But how was it possible, in such a situation, for the undisciplined mind to exert her faculties, and plan a scheme of private association, before a public was established; from whence alone she could derive that leisure and safety, which

## DIALOGUE I. 41

which were requisite to form the more distant scheme?

I can by no means allow, returned PHILOCLEES, that the self-appetites were under no restraint, even supposing a time, when civil compacts were not yet established. If self-affection pleads one way; benevolence (a passion equally belonging to our frame) pleads as strongly the other: and the latter can no more be suppressed than the former, without doing violence to nature.

But see the force of Truth! whilst you would represent your species under disadvantageous characters, you were insensibly led into an argument, which demonstrates benevolence to be the original growth of man's heart, and what must consequently have drawn him into society. Pity, you have allowed, is a natural passion. And  
what

what is pity, but love softened by a degree of sorrow, the meltings of a benevolent heart? This then was the generous sympathy, which knit mankind together and blended them in one common interest. From hence then it appears, that if nature did not directly dictate associations to the human kind, she yet gave them such preparative faculties, as drew them by degrees into national brotherhoods. In this view, “ she seems to have treated us as  
 “ a painter does his disciples, to whom he  
 “ commits some rude sketches and outlines; which they themselves are to color  
 “ and complete \*.”

The passion of pity is then a full proof, that men have naturally a love for  
 their

\* Ut Phidias potest à primo instituere signum, idque perficere; potest ab alio inchoatum accipere et absolvere: Huic est sapientia similis. Non enim ipsa genuit hominem, sed accepit à naturâ inchoatum: hanc ergo intuens, debet institutum illud, quasi signum, absolvere.

Cicero de Finibus, p. 99. Edit. Ald. Manuc.

their species, however it may be checked or stifled by some counter-inclination; which, it cannot be denied, is too often the case. Sensible of this truth, the legislators took infinite pains, and called forth all their skill, to rouse the dormant passion. This seems to be the concealed meaning of what the poets tell us concerning ORPHEUS and his lyre.

Thus in every view, it seems evident, that it was affection for the species, which drew men into society; and that without it, they never did, and never can subsist. For could nature intend to preserve and propagate the species, and not maintain fellowship and mutual affection? Whence arises that strict agreement between the sexes, in the care of their growing offspring, but from love? And can you stop here? How (as I remember Lord SHAFTSBURY closely puts the question)

“ How

## 44 DIALOGUE I.

“ How should man break off from this society, if once begun ? And that it began thus, and grew into an household, is an incontestable fact. And must not this household have soon grown into a tribe ? that tribe into a nation ? ”

Here PHILOCLES paused — when looking stedfastly on his friend — O SOPHRONIUS, said he, is it possible you can in good earnest contend against the reality of the kind and generous affections ? Is it possible you cannot discover a moral attraction in our natures, which unites mankind to each other, previous to all considerations of interest or convenience ?

But I have long suspected, that we are drawn into opinions from our constitutional propensities, as the stream follows the several declivities of the ground, through which it flows. Something, perhaps, of this kind



kind may have given a bias to my friend's sentiments, and turned them aside from that scheme he is opposing. But I will not despair of reconciling you to more favorable thoughts of the human kind. No method seems more probable to effect this, than a contemplation of nature in these her visible operations. From her (it is confessed) the designing and imitative arts derive all their energy and grace. And yet she herself, it seems, (helpless parent!) is destitute of all those charms and delicacies, she confers on her acknowledged offspring! But —

It is very possible, interrupted SOPHRONIUS, that the opinions of mankind may be influenced by their tempers. 'The fruit, no doubt, will partake of the nature of the soil. But PHILOCLES should remember, that the same observation will serve to explain the rise of his sentiments, no less than

## 46 DIALOGUE I.

than mine. I am, however, very willing to confess ; that I am always ashamed of being pleased, where I cannot assign the cause ; and am extremely apt to suspect my judgment concerning any object, that moves my passion. For this reason, I should hardly send my disciple to the school of arts (for there, PHILOCLES, you seemed to be pointing) for his instruction in the truth of severe philosophy. A good picture, a well-executed statue, or a fine style, give me (so far as I am able to discover clearly their respective beauties) some degree of pleasure. But when the professed admirers, the connoisseurs in these several arts, talk of their nameless graces, their certain inexplicable delicacies, and, I know not what, other fine terms, of which they themselves do not pretend to explain the meaning ; there, I confess, I am left behind, and reserve my rapture, till I receive my conviction.

For

For tell me, PHILOCLES, what is this DELICACY, either in the arts or conduct of life, which you are constantly extolling in such high strains, and with such an air of earnestness, as if you were persuaded that there is something in it real and substantial?

PHILOCLES was going to reply; when a servant informed them, that supper was upon the table. However, in their way to the house, he took occasion from the beautiful scenes they passed, to throw out some general reflections in support of his favorite doctrine: for he was determined to omit no opportunity of drawing his friend into the love and study of refinement; the disregard to which accomplishment, he looked upon as the chief deficiency in the character of SOPHRONIUS.



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## DIALOGUE II.

**A**S SOPHRONIUS is an early riser, he was amusing himself in the library, before PHILOCLES was yet stirring. But his friend, perceiving it now day, soon followed him thither, being unwilling to lose any opportunity of enjoying a conversation, in which he found himself often instructed, and always entertained.

How happy (said PHILOCLES entering the room) how happy would it be for the fashionable world, were they as well acquainted “ with this sweet hour of prime,”

50      DIALOGUE II.

as you SOPHRONIUS are, who seldom suffer the sun to rise upon you in bed !

Rather, replied SOPHRONIUS, how much happier would it be for the world in general, would certain active spirits be persuaded to slumber life away ! since they wake but to pursue their ambition, or vent their impertinences, and rise only to embroil or mislead mankind.

Undoubtedly, said PHILOCLE, if many of those, whose actions fill our histories, or whose speculations swell our libraries, had passed their whole lives in profound sleep ; the world would have been obliged to them for their repose, but can only now lament that they were ever awake.

I was reading the other day (continued he) a treatise upon bees : The ingenious author, speaking of the dormant state of insects, mentions an experiment he  
had

## DIALOGUE II. 51

had made of extending that period of their existence far beyond its usual duration, even to some years. If this philosopher could so improve his experiment, as to make it applicable to his own species, might not the discovery be turned to very singular advantage ?

For my own part, returned SOPHRONIUS, were I master of such a secret, I would rather apply it to the mistaken speculatist, than the falsely ambitious. The sons of turbulence can only affect their unfortunate contemporaries; and the mischief they do, generally ends with their lives. But the puzzlers and perverters of truth and science are pernicious, perhaps, to several generations, and disturb the repose of the world, many ages after they themselves are removed out of it. The first essay, I would make of my soporific art in the literary world, should be upon the critics, a tribe of

E 2 mortals,

## 52 DIALOGUE II.

mortals, in the republic of letters, more subversive of its peace and interest, than —

Hold, good SOPHRONIUS ! I doubt, your censure is now growing too general. Some low and petulant spirits, I confess, have brought a reproach upon the name of critic : but the art in itself certainly deserves esteem. No man can possess that talent in its true extent, or exercise it to full advantage, without being master of something much more valuable than ARISTOTLE or LONGINUS can teach him. He must have a certain quick feeling of DELICACY in arts and manners ; which no rules will ever be able to impart, where nature has denied.

Hardly, PHILOCLES, will you be able to bring me over to more favorable sentiments of this critic-science, by making DELICACY a necessary ingredient. For by all that I could ever discover of the true essence of that quality, as it is applied either  
to



to the operations of art, or the conduct of manners, it owes its whole existence entirely to fancy : and when I hear a man recommended as a critic of great delicacy, I immediately conclude him a person of high enthusiasm.

Do you really think then, SOPHRONIUS, that delicacy, whether considered as a faculty of the mind, or as an effect of art, is nothing more than the raptures of warm imagination, entirely unsupported by any principles of reason ?

I will not venture to pronounce, answered SOPHRONIUS, of the clearness of other men's ideas : and, perhaps, the nice refiners in taste and genius may have conceptions, to which common language cannot supply adequate terms. But of this I am sure : whenever they talk upon the subject ; either they resolve delicacy into a certain *Je ne sçai quoi*, or else explain it in so

## 54 DIALOGUE II.

vague and unprecise a manner, as to leave the matter absolutely undetermined, to a mind that cannot embrace any principle, but what it clearly apprehends.

However loosely, replied PHILOCLES, this term may have been used heretofore in our language ; or how much soever it is sometimes depreiated by a mistaken application both in writings and conversation ; yet with the most approved authors amongst us, it seems now to have obtained a determinate meaning, and is always mentioned by them as an high quality, and the finishing excellence of composition and manners.

As no man, PHILOCLES, is more clear in his conceptions than your self ; possibly I may receive that satisfaction from you, which I have in vain sought for elsewhere. Tell me then, I intreat you, wherein this quality, according to your notion, consists.

Delicacy,

## DIALOGUE II. 55

Delicacy, replied PHILOCLES, is good sense; but good sense refined; which produces an inviolable attachment to decorum, and sanctity as well as elegance of manners, with a clear discernment and warm sensibility of whatever is pure, regular, and polite; and, at the same time, an abhorrence of whatever is gross, rustic, or impure, of unnatural, effeminate, and over-wrought ornaments of every kind. It is, in short, the graceful and the beautiful added to the just and the good.

According to this account, said SOPHRONIUS, Delicacy seems to be exactly the same thing, that Urbanity was among the Romans.

When that illustrious people, answered PHILOCLES, had spread their military fame over the world, and subdued all the nations around; they then turned their

## 56 DIALOGUE II.

attention to the embellishments of life, Their success was equal to the vigor of their example; and they soon learned to polish their language, refine their pronunciation, cultivate humanity, and adorn their manners. A LÆLIUS and a SCIPIO <sup>Y</sup> arose, and transplanted liberal wit from Greece; which afterwards grew and prospered with a bloom and vigor scarce inferior to what it drew from its native soil.

Rome was now become the seat of elegance, as well as empire: nor were her eagles more dreaded, than her refinement was admired. The attainment of these accomplishments, they styled **URBANITY**; as they were the peculiar characteristics of the distinguished inhabitants of this imperial city. This

¶ Scipio tam elegans liberalium artium omnisque doctrinæ et auctor et admirator fuit, ut Polybium Panætiumque præcellentes ingenio viros domi militiæque secum habuerit. Neque quisquam hoc Scipione elegantius intervalla negotiorum otio disjunxit, semperque inter arma ac studia versatus, aut corpus periculis, aut animum disciplinis exercuit.

This I take to be the genuine acceptance of that word amongst the ancient Romans. It seems to have been confined to the qualities I have mentioned, and never applied to the fine arts, as *DELICACY* is with us, and therefore differs from it only as a part from the whole.

To admit for the present, said *SOPHRONIUS*, that all those ideas are justly comprehended under the word *DELICACY*, which you have collected in your description — Yet by what criterion is this property in any subject to be tried? In that operation of the faculties, which we call *REASONING*, the mind examines the objects, as they stand in reality: and for our direction, there is always a standard in the nature of things. But is this the case with regard to what connoisseurs call *AMIABLE* or *DELICATE*? Beauty and pleasure are nothing but an agreement between the object and  
the

the faculty. What then can determine a man's approbation or dislike in these points, but the peculiar cast of his mind ?

Tho' it should not be possible, answered PHILOCLES, precisely to fix the criterion you are enquiring after ; yet would it not necessarily follow, that there is absolutely no such thing. Several instances might be mentioned, wherein the mind has undoubtedly a certain fixed rule by which it judges ; when, nevertheless, it is not able to explain positively, in what that rule consists.

Will not a true judge in painting, who has been long conversant among the noble remains of that charming art, be able to distinguish a copy from an original ? And would not you, SOPHRONIUS, venture to give your testimony, in a court of justice, to your friend's hand-writing ? And yet, were you, or the connoisseur I just now mentioned, to be asked by what criterion  
you

you were able to determine so assuredly in the respective cases before you; neither of you most certainly, would be capable of ascertaining, to the satisfaction of the enquirer, that standard in your mind, by which you formed your several judgments.

But the standard, by which we are to be guided in the affair of DELICACY, is no doubtful or chimerical notion: it has a real and sure foundation.

Nature has implanted in us an internal sense; which gives us a just perception of the relation between our faculties of apprehending, and the objects presented to them. We are framed in such a manner, that some actions, ideas, or forms, which occur to us, as necessarily excite satisfaction and delight, as others create distaste and aversion. When we look upon a beautiful picture, the mind immediately recurs to nature; and finding a certain agree-  
ment

ment between its own ideas of beauty, and the representation which stands before us, it instantly acknowledges the similar graces, and recognizes the true and proper standard.

The criterion then of DELICACY in any action or composition, is the sure feeling and consciousness of its conformity to a like natural sensation within us, operating necessarily on the mind, the very instant that the kindred forms or ideas are exhibited to us. This sense and taste of beauty may indeed, like all our other faculties, be greatly improved by discipline and exercise; as on the contrary, for want of them, it may be much impaired. But still, it is evident, that this discerning power is born with us, and is as certain a principle, as any belonging to our nature. For do we not see, that even infants are delighted with the first view of a round ball, and prefer it to a less regular figure? The untaught mind discovers a sympathy between the  
ideas



## DIALOGUE II. 61

ideas and objects, and easily distinguishes the fair and shapely, from the irregular and deformed.

Hardly, said SOPHRONIUS, can this internal sense be looked upon as a sure criterion ; since men's notions are so widely different, that what raises the idea of beauty in one, may have a contrary effect upon another.

This kind of objection, returned PHILOCLES, may be urged with equal force against the evidence even of mathematical demonstration. Tho' the philosopher has evinced the truth of a proposition by the most infallible deductions of reasoning ; yet there may be some particular minds ; which, either through a Weakness of their faculties, or the intervention of wrong ideas, cannot feel the force of his conclusions. But this, you know, is no argument against the truth and certainty of the reasoning :  
the

the demonstration is no less clear, though not apprehended by every individual. It is the very same in our present inquiry. It cannot with any shew of reason be inferred, that there is no such thing as beauty, or no criterion to ascertain it, because some particular minds do not feel the one, or apprehend the other. If a dispute arise, we appeal to nature and the common feelings of mankind, and do not hesitate to affirm, that, what appears beautiful to one, will generally do so to another; if his faculties are right, and his attention fair and impartial.

Who ever denied the beauty of the VENUS DE MEDICIS? Or does any man say, there is not a distinguished delicacy in the works of those inimitable artists, RAPHAEL and GUIDO? Some connoisseurs may, it is true, give the preference to the former; and some perhaps be more charmed with the latter; or they may differ

fer in the degree of merit to be ascribed to this or that particular performance : but still they all agree that grace and elegance are the characteristicks of both these masters. This is a point, which never has been, and never will be contested. And whence can this universal consent arise, but from something certain and uniform in nature ? From whence, but that inward sense common to mankind, which operates with the same efficacy upon the generality of the species ?

Nor is this true with respect to the imitative arts only ; but it is equally applicable to every object that presents itself to us. —

Look yonder ! (said he, pointing to a view of the Thames) what a beautiful prospect lies before you ! Behold the gentle glidings of that lovely river ? See how he winds his full stream in pleasing meanders, steering his majestic course through  
verdant

verdant meads, and distributing wealth and pleasure, as he flows along ! Observe the numerous villas which adorn his banks, and are adorned by him ! — All, that have ever beheld this scene of delight, agree in admiring its charms, and acknowledge that the delicate ideas here raised in their minds, are perfectly correspondent to their natural sense of loveliness and grace.

NATURE then is the standard and ascertainer of DELICACY. To her tribunal the defenders of beauty make their appeal ; to her sentence they finally submit their cause.

The great masters of criticism have indeed, upon very just grounds, been esteemed by all improved nations, as proper regulators of taste ; and therefore a deference is due to their known rules and established measures. But this deference is not founded on the authority of their names, but  
on

## DIALOGUE II. 65

justness of their observations and reasonings. And on this account they have ever been looked upon as infallible guides, to prevent the mind from deviating out of the plain paths of nature.

Granting, returned SOPHRONIUS, that you have pointed out a proper standard for the trial of beauty in the imitative arts; will the same rule serve for THE DELICACY OF GOOD-BREEDING ? This seems to depend entirely upon prevailing customs, which are of so unsettled a nature, that they are ever varying with the complexion of times and climates. What is looked upon as polite in one age or country, is, you are sensible, esteemed the reverse in another. How then can there be any settled principle, to direct our judgment concerning a thing so vague and inconstant ?

That part of good manners, replied PHILOCLES, to which you here allude,  
F
relates

## 66 DIALOGUE II.

relates only, I suppose, to certain forms and ceremonies. And as far as these are absolutely indifferent in themselves, and have no other value but what they derive from the fashionable world; to that standard alone (wavering and uncertain as it is) we must be content to refer ourselves in this case. But yet surely there are many exterior observances and forms of behavior, in which we may clearly discover a comeliness or inelegance, that arises manifestly from a conformity or unsuitableness to the nature of things, to common sense, and an inbred feeling of DECORUM. If this were otherwise; on what principle do we claim a right to draw comparisons between the politeness of different countries, and give the usages and customs of one, the preference to those of another?

But however this may be; yet the more essential points of DELICACY IN MANNERS are clearly ascertained by our internal

ternal sense, and are therefore invariably the same in every age and every climate.

Suppose a man, for instance, to be solicited by his friend to do him a good office, or lend him assistance in distress. After great importunity he yields to his intreaties, but with such a sullen air, and reluctant countenance, as must offend even the receiver. — Who would not feel the odiousness of granting a request with such circumstances of indecency? Suppose another man conferring a favor with such a pleasing cheerfulness and humane address, as makes the giver appear to be the person obliged — In this case, it is impossible for any, but the most brutal and degenerate, not to be sensible of the comeliness of such a demeanor, and applaud this amiable manner of heightening the value of a generous action.

In such points of behavior then as these, which are the most material parts of good-breeding, we have the same rule to form our judgments, as in the imitative arts. They depend not on the caprice of fashion, or the varying complexion of times and climates ; but are founded on that internal sense of **DECORUM**, that universal humanity, common and natural to all mankind ; which is the ground of our love and hatred, the guide of our approbation and dislike.

If we proceed farther, and extend our inquiries to things of higher importance, to the noblest and most essential beauty, the purity of a moral conduct——

That culture of the mind, interrupted **SOPHRONIUS**, which leads a man to see and feel the comeliness of **VIRTUE**, has undoubtedly a sure foundation, and an infallible



## DIALOGUE II. 69

fallible standard in nature. And as this kind of refinement is of the highest concern to us, it must be allowed to have a just claim to our best attention and regard. But here, PHILOCLES, I must stop. Any thing, beyond this, seems to me a misfortune rather than an happiness.

It has been justly observed, that men of a delicate frame are too sensibly affected with the accidents of life. Upon any prosperous event, their spirits are apt to be elevated beyond all bounds : and in adversity, their grief pierces so deep into the tender frame, that it becomes insupportable. It is possible, perhaps, that in some instances they may have more lively enjoyments than men of a coarser mould ; but then they have also more pungent sorrows. Occurrences, which would have no effect upon a stronger mind, afflict them to the last degree : the most trivial disappointment, the omission of a ceremony, a careless word or

F 3

gesture,

gesture, nay even a look will discompose their temper, and cast an heavy gloom on their minds.

This observation, returned PHILOCLES, is founded on a mistaken notion of the true character of DELICACY. If fine sensations are not supported with strong sense, they dwindle into effeminacy: nor had ever any man an elegant taste, who had not also a sound understanding. There is indeed in a delicate frame a certain degree of softness: but then it is only just as much as suffices to prevent the inconveniences, that attend upon the rough and boisterous passions. Something, it must be owned, there is in it, not unlike a feminine tenderness; but no more than serves to render the mind susceptible of the fine impressions of beauty, and give amiableness to that masculine strength, on which a delicate taste so much depends, that it cannot possibly subsist without it. To be  
able

able to form a right judgment of arts and manners; to see and feel their symmetry and proportion; there are, you must be sensible, so many views to be taken in, and such variety of circumstances to be compared; that it is impossible any one can arrive at true refinement, who has not strong natural abilities. There may, it is true, be good sense, where the exquisiteness of taste is wanting: but there can be no exquisite taste without good sense.

That frame of mind therefore, which you represent as laboring under all the inconveniences of nice and tender sensations, I can by no means allow to have any fair pretensions to the character of GENUINE DELICACY; which is never attended with those consequences, that flow from an imbecillity of passions.

Were I to allow this, returned SOPHRONIUS; yet DELICACY, according to

## 72 DIALOGUE II.

your own idea of it, is certainly liable to many unhappy consequences. Let me mention one; which, I think, should very much abate a man's ardor of obtaining this quality. As it has such an "inviolable attachment to every thing that is elegant and polite; and such an abhorrence of inelegance and coarseness";<sup>z</sup> it must necessarily deprive a man of that great satisfaction in life, the frequency of social enjoyment. Seldom will he be able to find company adapted to his taste: his expectations run high; and the fund to supply them is extreme scanty. How few are there, who ever aim at such refinement! How much fewer, who attain it! The generality of men must therefore be disagreeable and irksome to him: and he will very rarely meet with one, from whose society he can receive any tolerable degree of entertainment.

What

<sup>z</sup> Vide p. 7. *supra*.

What then has he gained by this fastidious niceness? He has refined himself into a disinclination to be pleased with the intercourses of almost all around him, and the ordinary satisfactions of his being. For-faking therefore his own kind, he resolves, in a fit of spleen, to sequester himself from the world, as being too delicate to live amongst such uncultivated mortals. But in vain does he seek redress from solitude: for by this estrangement from human commerce, he contracts, by degrees, such an inveterate peevishness and severity, as imbitters his whole life, and ends, perhaps, at last in a settled misanthropy.

This, PHILOCLES, may prove, and, I doubt not, has often proved the consequence of cultivating such a DELICACY of sentiment,

And

And is this a desirable state? Is it any symptom of a sound habit? On the contrary; are not these the sad indications of a vitiated and diseased constitution of mind?

How different is the state of that man, who is not over-nice and curious in his demands of social intercourse! As he has not raised his ideas of human nature to an immoderate height; he is content to take mankind as he finds them, with allowances to their foibles and imperfections. And as he has not refined his sensations into an inaptitude of being pleased; he can scarce converse with any of his fellow-creatures, without some degree of entertainment.

That refinement then, which robs a man of these ordinary satisfactions, is surely rather to be avoided than pursued: and a temper even the most insensible to every  
beauty

beauty and grace, is far preferable to a disposition so hard to be pleased, and which can be so seldom gratified.

If this DELICACY of taste, replied PHILOCLES, narrows the circle of our friendships; it certainly renders them more perfect. An indifference to the company and conversation of the MANY, will add strength and duration to our particular attachments. It is very true, a man of an unrefined frame, how strong soever his sense may be, is not nice and exact in selecting his acquaintance: almost any are sufficient to answer his demands. Such a man has not sensations fine enough to make an election; and has therefore no friends, because he has no DELICACY. But is that a desirable state of mind, which excludes one of the greatest ornaments and joys of human life? It must be owned, that he who has digested his observations on mankind, and formed his mind to an excellence  
and

and elegance of sentiment, cannot take any great delight in mixed and undistinguished company ; and will therefore be inclined to limit his friendships and acquaintance. But his affections, being thus circumscribed within narrow bounds, will consequently rise to an higher pitch, than if they were more diffused. This is so far from lessening, that it increases the ardor of our enjoyments : and if it diminish the number, it heightens the value of our friendships.

I will not deny, that the cultivation of refined sentiment may give a man a disrelish to the general turn of conversation. Whenever therefore he cannot find such society as is adapted to his disposition ; why should he be censured for stepping aside from the beaten track of life, to indulge in separate thought, and the calm delights of self-enjoyment ? This surely is a measure rather to be applauded than condemned ;



## DIALOGUE II. 77

demned ; and what every sensible man wou'd pursue in such a case : for,

“ ——— Wisdom's self

“ Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude ;

“ Where with her best nurse, contemplation,

“ She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings ;

“ Which, in the various bustle of resort,

“ Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.”

Let him not remain too long sequestered, but return in proper time to mix again with the world ; and his conduct can neither be deemed inconsistent with social affection, nor have any ill effect upon his temper. If indeed he extend his love of retirement so far, as absolutely to exclude himself from society, I cannot undertake his vindication. He is gone beyond the point of perfection, and is therefore indelicate.

SOPHRO-

<sup>a</sup> Milton's Comus,

## 78      DIALOGUE II.

SOPHRONIUS attended very earnestly to these observations of his friend, and seemed by his countenance to be almost convinced in this point.

After a pause ——— Suppose, said he, I should allow your reasonings to be just, in this particular; and that the DELICACY of taste in the choice of friends may, perhaps, be an happiness rather than a misfortune: yet I am still doubtful, whether this quality in general be a necessary attainment. For after all that you have said, or can possibly urge farther on this subject; I am persuaded, that good sense, a right mind, and generous affection, have such a native comeliness, that they stand in need of no adventitious ornaments, but like diamonds, appear to full advantage, when plain set.

The

The diamond, returned PHILOCLES, was polished, before it was set. And whatever value it might have in its rough state; it had certainly no beauty, till it came from the hands of the judicious artist. Thus it is with sense and virtue: they are jewels indeed, even when rough and unadorned: but surely their merit is more attractive, and they command a much higher estimation, when they are set off with suitable embellishments.

Hence it was that SOCRATES, the wisest and best of all the Grecian sages, tempered the harshness of precepts with an air of pleasantry; well knowing, that to please, was the surest way to persuade. He therefore stript philosophy of her uncouth attire, and gave her a more graceful mein.

Our

Our chief business in life is indeed to form just sentiments, in order to produce a just conduct. Yet something still is wanting; some additional grace, to make truth and virtue operate with full success, both with respect to ourselves and our fellow-creatures. They may, it is true, procure us the esteem, but will not be able to gain us the love of mankind, without  
AN HAPPINESS OF MANNER.

It is with great justice, SOPHRONIUS sets so high a value on the generous affections: but valuable as they undoubtedly are, yet if they be not accompanied with a certain grace, they will neither have the merit nor efficacy of benevolence attended by DELICACY.

It is your humor to run down every thing, that tends to refinement. Yet from many instances you must allow me  
to

## DIALOGUE II. 71

to say, that you are not, in reality, so great an enemy to it, as you affect to appear. No man confers a favor with a better grace. Extend your refinement farther, and you will find it no less useful in the momentous affairs of life. Truth and virtue are, in these cases, what foundation and strength are to an edifice: they give solidity and support. But if symmetry, proportion, and suitable decorations be not added; you cannot boast of a complete structure.

In every view, SOPHRONIUS, it is evident, I think, that the refinements and elegancies of life, not only render men more agreeable and amiable to one another, but are also conducive to the greatest and highest purposes. For this reason, perhaps, the author of our frame has made us susceptible of the pleasures of imagination; that we might be the more readily gained over to the interests of

G

virtue;

virtue; when we thus find, that the way to her lies through the paths of pleasure.

This seems to be the excellent design, and this is ever found to be the constant effect of genuine DELICACY. When it conspires with virtue, its influence is as surely felt, as its loveliness is readily acknowledged: like mingled streams, they become more forcible by being united.

Thus it is, that these mutual friends confirm and strengthen each other's interest. DELICACY allures men to VIRTUE; and VIRTUE ascertains and supports DELICACY. The connexion between them is strong; the harmony perfect; and the effects answerable.

But do we not see many, returned SOPHRONIUS, distinguished for the elegance of their taste, both in arts and manners, who at the same time are insensible  
of

of moral beauty, and utter strangers to the sensations of inward harmony and proportion ?

It is no uncommon thing, answered PHILOCLES, for men to live at variance with themselves, and in contradiction to their own principles. This must be the case of those, who cultivate the exterior embellishments of life, whilst their minds lie waste and neglected. For what is that principle, on which they ground their entertainment and pleasure of refined taste, but a sense of symmetry, order and proportion in nature ? They cannot then but be sensible, that there is such a thing as beauty in the mind, as well as in the outward forms, and the latter, however valuable in itself, yet when compared with the former, is but of a subordinate and lower degree. It is possible that the elegance of their fancy in the inferior kind may have engrossed their attention, and made them overlook the superior worth of the other ;

## 74. DIALOGUE II.

especially where some unsubdued passions concur to help on the mistake ; or the force of inveterate habit has taught them to stop at the low attainment of subaltern beauty. But when fancy is fatiated, and reason has leisure to operate ; they must, in the philosophic hour, perceive the absurdity of admiring EXTERIOR symmetry, without recurring to the INTERIOR, the more essential beauty. Whilst therefore they act in opposition to these suggestions of the mind, they must unavoidably be unhappy.

Your observation, said SOPHRONIUS, brings to my mind an assertion, which I find maintained by many of the celebrated ancients and moderns ; “ that the high and “ genuine taste (as they call it) of the “ polite arts, never resided in the breast “ of an immoral man.” They imagined it impossible for one, who was impure in his actions, to be refined in his sensations : since, in their estimation, the same faculties



## DIALOGUE II. 75

ties and dispositions, which would lead a man to discern and relish the charms of arts, would necessarily incline him to taste and admire the delights of a regular conduct; betwixt which, they thought, there was an inseparable connexion. But this is one of the fanciful maxims of enthusiastic genius; and instances might be produced, which incontestably demonstrate the falshood of the assertion.

When you consider, replied PHILOCLES, what a strong disposition there is in mankind, to vilify those, whose extraordinary talents lift them up to the notice and admiration of the world; you will be very tender in giving a decisive sentence in the case. But if we take the objection in its strongest light; will a few instances of deviation overthrow a general maxim? Still it may be true, that the study of the fine arts naturally leads to the love of virtue. When a  
man

man has given himself up to these engaging speculations; they take such full possession of the heart, that he is not at leisure to lend an ear to the calls of ambition, or the demands of inordinate self-passions. And as these grand inciters of vice are thus happily silenced; he is more likely to hearken to the suggestions of virtue, and incline more readily to every duty of benevolence and social regard.

Upon the whole; from the best and coolest judgment I have been able to make; I cannot but be of opinion, it very rarely happens, that a man of a true refined taste in arts and literature, is not at least an honest man. He may now and then, perhaps, be betrayed into some little slips and mistakes in his conduct: but these unwarinesses do not darken the whole character, nor give any just grounds to fix upon him the imputation of immorality.

## DIALOGUE II. 77

rality. “ Such small stains and blemishes  
“ (as the inimitable Mr. ADDISON observes)  
“ die away and disappear, amidst the  
“ brightness which surrounds him.”

But the bell has rung for breakfast. — Come, good SOPHRONIUS, — the ladies will grow impatient.

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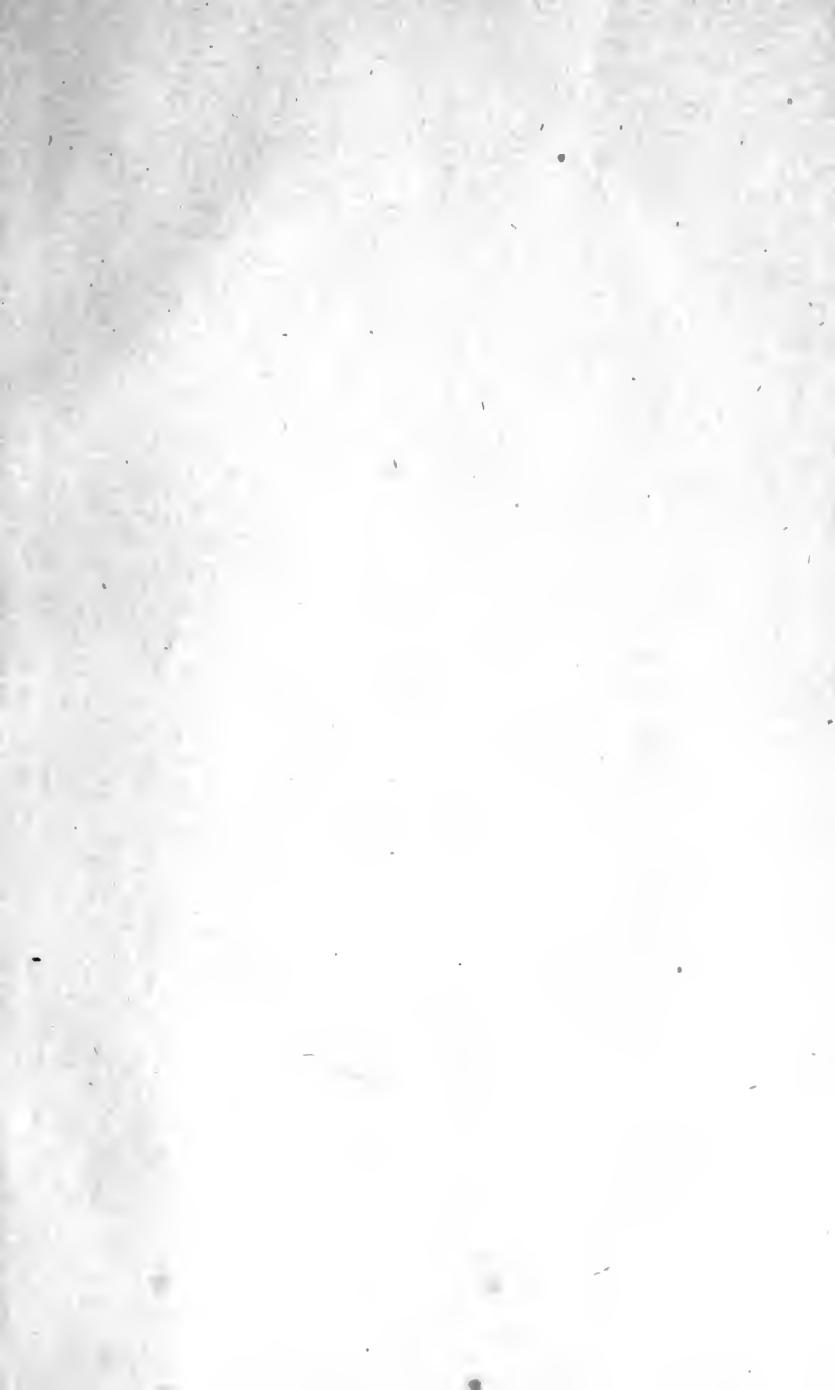
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